



News Release

READOUT: US DEPARTMENT OF LABOR REPORT FINDS IMPACT OF CAREGIVING ON MOTHER'S WAGES REDUCES LIFETIME EARNINGS BY 15 PERCENT

WASHINGTON – U.S. Department of Labor and elected federal officials held a media briefing today to discuss the release of a report by the department's Women's Bureau on how caring for family has long-term impacts on a mother's lifetime earnings.

Women's Bureau Director Wendy Chun-Hoon and U.S. Representatives Gwen Moore, Susan Wild and Shontel Brown shared findings from the "[Lifetime Employment-Related Costs to Women of Providing Family Care](#)" report. Women's Bureau Senior Advisor Sarah Jane Glynn also took part in the briefing.

The report finds the amount of time women spend providing essential care to children and adults has a substantial personal economic cost that continues long after the caregiving ends. The estimated employment-related costs for mothers providing unpaid care averages \$295,000 over a lifetime, based on the 2021 U.S. dollar value, adjusted for inflation. Unpaid family caregiving reduces a mother's lifetime earnings by 15 percent, which also creates a reduction in retirement income.

"Families often think first of immediate demands out of necessity. Children, aging loved ones and people with disabilities need care right now, and when that care is needed during working hours – or is too expensive or inaccessible — it is the mothers who usually scale back on paid work to provide care," explained Women's Bureau Director Wendy Chun-Hoon. "This report shows that lacking the necessary care infrastructure and safety net affects more than those immediate moments. They continue throughout a woman's life."

"Unpaid caregiving is work and should be recognized as such. This report is another reminder of the long-term cost women incur by providing unpaid care, and it cannot go ignored," said Congresswoman Gwen Moore. "I am working to ensure our federal policies support those providing unpaid care to loved ones, uplifting women and their families, so we can build an equitable, modern economy."

"Women spend invaluable time providing compassionate, dedicated care for their children and family members – and their reduced lifetime earnings because of it illustrate just how important solving the childcare crisis is," said Congresswoman Susan Wild. "Lack of accessible, affordable childcare in Pennsylvania impacts our economy to the tune of more than \$6 billion per year, harming working moms' and working families' ability to earn more and get ahead. I'm proud to be leading the 'Child Care for Working Families Act' to expand care options for all moms and families and unlock our full economic potential."

"This report is a call to action. All families should have access to affordable childcare if we want to have an inclusive economy," said Congresswoman Shontel Brown. "Families across the nation and from all demographics are struggling with high childcare costs. This financial burden is especially high in historically marginalized communities, including Black mothers, as they are the least likely to scale back employment after having children due to challenging economic conditions. A lack of affordable care puts so much pressure on families, Black women deserve the ability to build wealth and build a family. Our children, mothers and families in Northeast Ohio deserve better."

Although its findings relies on sophisticated modeling to focus on the costs associated with caregiving activities for mothers, the report – prepared for the Women's Bureau by the Urban Institute – acknowledges that the costs are likely conservative estimates that do not include the total economic costs borne by all caregivers.

[Review the "Lifetime Employment-Related Costs to Women of Providing Family Care."](#)

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